

CATHARINE;

OR, THE

WOOD OF LLEWELLYN:

A

DESCRIPTIVE TALE,

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

VILLAGE OF MARTINDALE, &c.

This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook, than flourishing peopled towns.

Shakespeare.

In such green palaces the first Kings reign'd,
Slept in their shades, and Angels entertain'd.

Waller.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CATHARINE.

LETTER XXII.

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

THE chace is over, but although we have been successful, I cannot say we have had good sport.

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B

On

On our arrival at the wood we made the necessary enquiries of the cottager, relative to Catharine's confinement. He pretended the most profound ignorance of the whole affair; and there was such an artless simplicity pictured on his countenance, that, at first, I was almost induced to believe him.— However, on a cross examination, his prevaricating answers convinced me of his guilt. I now tried what effect a bribe would have upon this rustic evidence, but, to my astonishment, he rejected my offer with disdain, and although I doubled the sum first proposed, he still continued firm and uncorrupted. Mr. Mortimer then began a solemn remonstrance, which likewise failing of success, his irritable passions broke loose,

loose, and he thundered out the most terrible threats and denunciations. But the rocks that sheltered his cottage, stood not with more firmness against the furious hurricane, than this heroic old man, against Mr. Mortimer's menaces.— Finding it impossible to gain any intelligence or assistance from him, we proceeded to beat the wood without a guide. We could penetrate but a very little way. At every step we took, from our first entrance, we found the underwood grow thicker and more difficult to pass. At last, the thorns and brambles were so closely knotted, and entangled with the low trees and shrubs, that grew thick between the large trunks of oaks, firs and beeches, that they were entirely impervious.

We were now obliged to make our retreat from this quarter; and ascending the mountain, by the skirts of the wood, we returned down on the opposite side, in hopes of finding a place more accessible. Had it not, however, been for a fortunate accident, we might have continued our search until doomsday, without success. As we were passing the bottom of the wood, next the sea-shore, a spaniel, which had followed Mr. Mortimer, ran in among the bushes, where he continued a considerable time, barking most vehemently. I supposed a hare was sitting somewhere near the spot, and began to beat among the brakes and nettles, when, accidentally removing the branch of a tree that hung over the hedge, I observed
under

under it a small cavity, which had been cut through the thick brambles. I conjectured that this was a private passage into the wood, and desiring my companions to follow me, I crept into the cavity. As we advanced the path grew broader, till at last we found ourselves in a lane, wide enough to receive two persons a-breast. We proceeded up this alley, until we arrived nearly at the centre of the wood; when we came to a small green space, from whence the shrubs and bushes had been cleared away; in the middle of which, to our surprise, we saw an old thatched cottage, standing under a knot of tall birch trees. I lifted the latch of the cottage, but, when the door opened, what a spectacle presented itself!—

A beautiful young woman (whom, you will easily conceive was no other than Catharine) was lying prostrate on the floor. A deadly paleness was spread over her face, she was gasping for breath, and, to all appearance, struggling with the last pangs of mortality. We raised her, and with difficulty placed her on a rush-seated chair, which stood in the hut. Mr. Mortimer was shocked at finding his daughter in such a state. He spoke to her, but she could only answer him with groans, so faint, that they seemed to die inwardly before they could be delivered. With great difficulty, she raised her trembling snowy arm, and pointed towards the sea, while the tears ran down her cheeks and a piteous sigh burst from her bosom, that

that almost shattered her tender frame. We did not understand these gestures, nor did we think it adviseable to wait a single moment to learn the cause of them. Our first object was to give her all possible relief and assistance, and dispatching one of our servants to the nearest village for an apothecary, and another to the Abbey, for Mr. Mortimer's carriage, with the aid of the rest we lifted her out of the wood, and in a few hours she was conveyed home.

I am truly sorry to add, that we do not entertain the faintest idea of her recovery. My hopes of possessing this unhappy girl, have all along been blasted by a strange fa-

tality. Whenever I have come within reach of her, she has eluded my grasp. I have pursued her like a child following its own shadow.

LETTER XXIII.

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE,

TO

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN.

THE conclusion of thy doleful epistle puts me in mind of Mr. Bayes' celebrated song of "*Farewel, fair Armida.*" — Pray Edmund, endeavour, at least, to assume a little more courage, and re-
serve

serve thy melancholy for some more proper occasion. But "You have no hopes of her recovery." Why, then thou art a very stupid fellow. Know you not, that girls desperately in love (and the unaccountable conduct of Miss Mortimer proves to demonstration, that she is in love with somebody) have more lives than drowning kittens. There is no end to them, they sprawl, and struggle with their fate so prettily, and when their strength seems exhausted, and a moderate man would swear they had not another breath to draw, the sweet little creatures will suddenly raise their heads, and *mew* forth their complaints so sorrowfully, that one is obliged to afford them a drop of pity and of comfort.

Prithee,

Prithee, friend, let me hear no more of thy despondency. Take my advice, and you will soon find Catharine's health restored. You will see her again blooming and beautiful. Her skin will be restored to its original transparency, and a tempting blush succeed to the sickly yellow that now deadens her features.

"How am I to effect so wonderful a cure?" "It is absolutely impossible," you will say. Hold thy silly tongue, Edmund. I will write thee a prescription in four words, which, if thou shouldst follow, and not find thy purpose answered by it, then never trust me again.

KEEP OFF THE PHYSICIANS!

Why,

Why, man, have you not often sworn that Miss Mortimer was a goddess? Be of good cheer then, for she must consequently be immortal. A dead goddess, you will own, would be somewhat of a remarkable being. A thing that even in Ireland could hardly be said to *exist*.

Should you make use of my prescription, her recovery will be infinitely more rapid than you can imagine. You may arrive at the summit of your wishes. You may be the husband of Catharine Mortimer, within a few weeks. For your further encouragement, I can now assure you, that you need no longer dread the ridicule of your quondam associates, for you will not
run

run the race of matrimony alone.— I myself am going to start for the prize. Mine, it is true, will be but a cross and jostling match, but an expert jockey has a right to take all advantages. To be more explicit, you know, Edmund, that if my estates were all sold, and my mortgages paid off, I should not have a groat left. But I am beginning at the wrong end of the story.—

I have lately seen a bewitching girl, whose face has pleased me, and whose fortune has charmed me — With her religion, however, I am not quite so much delighted. She cannot properly be called either Christian, Pagan or Mahometan, but seems to be tinctured with the principles of them all. In short, she

she is a frequenter of octagon temples; a worshipper of brazen-lunged deities, — in plainer words, a right down Methodist. In this profession of faith, if it may be so called, she was instructed, even when an infant. Her father, who is a jew in riches, has long been the oldest standing pillar of the conventicle. During the course of eighteen years, he has given his daughter so large a dose of the spirit, that she at last became quite intoxicated. Were you to see her in the height of her enthusiasm, it would recal to your remembrance the finished picture which your old acquaintance, Virgil, has drawn of his inspired Sybil.

Now, Edmund, although, as I said before, I am not in love with
this

this religion, yet I am a friend to it, so far as it will forward my views, and it is admirably adapted to the purposes of hypocrisy. I have reason to think that I have already made some impression on the heart of the charming enthusiast, for I have seriously professed myself a convert to her opinion, and have entered my name in the calendar of modern saints.

I have, indeed, been obliged to undergo a strict examination before the *straight-haired* college. Fortunately for me, however, I did not barely pass muster, but acquitted myself with considerable credit.— I was aware, that the principles of the sect were so dark and mysterious, that even my judges themselves

selves were not able to explain them
 rationally. My answers, therefore,
 to the various questions that were
 put to me, were so obscure and
 equivocal, and delivered with a look
 of such profound sagacity, that I
 was universally allowed to have
 made a great progress in the my-
 stic doctrine. Indeed, I have since
 greatly improved, being now a
 wholesale-dealer in dreams, visions,
 and inspirations, and a haberdasher
 of prophecies. The profits arising
 from this sort of traffic will be more
 considerable than you can imagine.
 An estate of three thousand
 a year, and a beautiful woman into
 the bargain.

You cannot conceive the benefit
 I have derived, during my court-
 ship

ship, from my lately acquired knowledge. I am seldom at a loss to support my part in our most faintly dialogues, while the hollow groan, the folded hands, and the up-lifted eyes (a sort of *tactics* in our church militant, of which I am perfect master) never fail to help me out at a *dead lift*. My fair one is also extremely well versed in this whole science of tabernacle eloquence, and you would laugh yourself breathless were you to see how wonderfully responsive to each other are our gestures and looks. It has been often, you know, observed, that there is a close connection between these spiritual raptures, and those of an inferior and less refined nature, and that your puritanical little wenches are always the most amorous.

rous. I have not a doubt but I shall, in a short time, be able to completely verify these observations in my own case; nothing, I conceive, being so easy as the transition, from these imaginary, to more real and substantial feelings.

Permit me, now I am upon this subject, to give you an instance of the immense value of a few well-timed cant phrases, of the religious kind, in a somewhat different way. A considerable tradesman, who is one of *us*, told me one day, in confidence, that by these pious commodities, which he always takes care to mix most plentifully with his worst articles, he has not only been able to multiply the number of his customers, beyond his most fan-

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guine expectations, but even to raise the price of his goods almost ad libitum. "The blessing of God," and other similar benedictions, said he, did very well, at first, but are now become so hackneyed as to lose much of their effect. Of late, therefore, I sprinkled them but sparingly, and chiefly among novices. But, continued he, for these seven years past, the bare asseveration of "*God knows it,*" uttered with a certain solemnity of tone, of gesture, and of look, has, by a fair computation, brought me in two hundred a year.

From this worthy gentleman's lessons, I have derived much profit, and am now able to fight these hypocrites with their own weapons.

By

By a refined piece of deception, I
have already out-witted the whole
tabernacle, and the farce, tho' not
to me of the pleasantest kind, must
be carried on till I have lured my
lovely fanatic into the toil, and
when I once get the jewel into my
possession, I can have it fashioned
and polished to my own taste.

LETTER XXIV.

COLONEL HARLEY,

T O

THE HONOURABLE MISS PERCIVAL.

SONNET.

THE pang that lovers feel,
Each lighter ill beguiles;

C 2

O!

O! love, thy fighs,
 More grateful rise,
 Than folly's broadest smiles.

But absence, friend to none,
 More black than wint'ry skies;
 Hides beauty's transient sun,
 And soon the lover dies!

Reclin'd in Charlotte's arms,
 When cares disturb my breast;
 Her tears that flow,
 Can soothe my woe,
 And lull my soul to rest.

But absence, friend to none,
 More black than wint'ry skies;
 Hides beauty's transient sun,
 And soon the lover dies!

It is strange, my dear Charlotte, that you should desire me to be eternally sonnetteering. If my ballads are not produced as regularly as the odes of the poet laureat, you are sure to grow fullen. You forget that I am now in my forty-sixth year, and therefore cannot, like a fiery bard of two and twenty, scramble up the steep hill of Parnassus, without losing breath. Besides, my muse is not half so playful as when we wandered together over the flowery meadows of Bath-wick. She has now been so long shut up in this smokey city, that she is almost suffocated. The linnet, you know, confined in a gloomy cage, sings not half so delightfully as when perched upon a green hedge, in its native fields. Excuse the comparison.

If I have compared my muse to a linnet, it is because she is, at best, but a little trifling warbler. She does not attempt the more bold and elevated notes of the thrush, and the nightingale. Perhaps, however, she is more like a hedge-sparrow, who is for ever attempting something like a tune, but is only a chirper at the best. But my dearest friend, if I cannot *sing* the pangs of absence, I can *feel* them. I have felt many a gloomy hour since we parted. Many a time have I shook my grey hairs in despair, and many a secret tear has stolen down my furrowed cheeks. But are not these things ridiculous in a man of my years? Sometimes I think I am an excellent mark for satire. But, my dear Charlotte, let satire shoot its
 envenomed

envenomed shafts. I, who have freely bled in my country's service, should be even more proud of a wound in your's. After all, I am not so old as I imagined. I have been making an excellent calculation. The age of a man is threescore years; that of an old man threescore and ten. Therefore, take courage, I am now but little past the prime of life. In a word, I am, strictly speaking, a *handsome, little, lean, middle-aged gentleman*. I have now said enough in my own praise.

What can possibly be the reason of your not hearing from the lovely Catharine? I begin to suspect that she has not arrived at Guernsey in safety. But I wish not to alarm
your

your fears. Her last letter told you, that she expected the arrival of Mr. Ackland every moment, to convey her from the coast. Perhaps she has written since, and your sudden visit to your brother at Plymouth, has occasioned the miscarriage of her letter. For I think the chances are, at least, a thousand to one, that in the hurry of your removal from Bath, you were not so attentive, as to leave your address at your lodgings.

LETTER

CATHARINE. 25

LETTER XXV.

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

YOU prophesied well. She has recovered. But her recovery was not owing to your prescription, for she has been attended by no less than three of the Esculapian tribe; one of whom, every day, walked at least ten miles over the mountains, and after pocketing his little fee, skipped back again with the nimbleness of a native goat. I have seen her but once, yet I think her more charming than ever. But she

she is still pensive and dejected, and always in tears. She keeps close to her chamber, is for ever sighing as if her mind were oppressed by some deep distress, and will speak to nobody except in monosyllables. This air of melancholy, I imagine, she thinks it necessary to put on, because it is becoming, and it certainly *does* considerably heighten her beauty. It is the only way in which she can be revenged on us, for preventing her escape, and disappointing her Guernsey admirer. If this formidable rival has yet made his appearance on the coast, I suppose he has found it necessary to decamp without his prize. My servant informs me, there are strange whisperings, hints, and half sentences, passing
between

between Mr. Mortimer's female domestics. There is some secret, relative to Catharine, in agitation, which he has not yet been able to unravel. But the fellow remarks, justly enough, that as it is in the keeping of women it will not be a secret long.

I approve highly of your new connections, and have no doubt of your success. The name of Saint Arthur will make a respectable appearance in the journals of the tabernacle.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

FROM THE SAME.

THE secret is out, and I begin this letter, in the stile of the celebrated Dr. Katerfelto, with "wonders ! wonders ! and wonders !" You have heard me swear, a thousand times, that I never would marry a widow. My inclinations, however, have lately taken a strange turn. Legions of new ideas have sprung up in my head, and every one of these ideas is in the form of a beautiful widow. At this instant, I have at least ten thousand of them, rioting and dancing in my pericranium, They have already beat

beat my poor brains into a phrensy. In short, I feel all the luxuries of madness, which, (it has long enough been agreed) none but mad men can enjoy. I am now fit to shine in your conventicle, and were I to offer myself as a candidate, I believe my election would be secure. But to the story.—

It was agreed by the Physicians, that, although Catharine's health, was in great measure restored, there was yet a heavy oppression upon her spirits, which could not be removed by medicine; but that regular exercise and cheerful society were now the best remedies they could prescribe. In consequence of this advice, Mr. Mortimer, last night, invited a small party of both
sexes,

sexes, consisting of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood, and preremptorily insisted that Catharine, who had hitherto confined herself to her chamber, should make her appearance in the drawing-room. This was joyful news to *me*, for I had seen her but once since her return, and that by mere stratagem. During the course of the day, at least, a score of notes and letters were written by the lovely dissembler to Mr. Mortimer, in which she protested that she was still too much indisposed to appear, and earnestly prayed for a longer respite from company. This petition was backed by the most tender and dutiful expressions, nor did she forget a pathetic appeal to his feelings. But neither her tears nor remonstrances had the least effect on my friend, who

who, to do him justice, has really a heart of iron. Even I, who do not easily yield to the enticements of eloquence, and who have seldom been melted by the idea of *fine sentiment*, had I been the father of such a daughter, addrest in so endearing a manner, and like him—
—but let me not incur the censure of ingratitude.

What I felt, for several hours previous to this interview, I will not attempt to describe. Thou wouldst do no more than laugh at my weakness, and turn my pain into ridicule. By six o'clock the company were assembled, but no Catharine had yet made her appearance. In a few minutes, however, she entered the room, in deep mourning.

mourning. Every one was surprised to see her in this dress.—Mr. Mortimer was quite confounded. As for me, I was struck dumb with admiration, so exquisitely beautiful did she appear,—so full of grace and dignity. In short, I know not how to convey my idea of her. She appeared to be changed, and yet the same. She was still the lovely Catharine Mortimer, but it was the Catharine Mortimer of a superior race of beings. As soon as she had taken her seat, a short silence ensued.—The mystery of the mourning was now to be explained.

“If I have sustained any loss in my family, said Mr. Mortimer, in as mild a tone of voice as he was capable

capable of, "I am yet ignorant of my misfortune. I will therefore thank you, my dear child, if you will inform me, on whose account you wear those weeds."

"I dare not elude your question, I will not deceive you, my only parent," answered Catharine, flinging herself at his feet, and bathing his hand with tears. — "These weeds are not merely the trappings of ceremony, they are worn in dear remembrance of him whom I loved, if I should say, loved equally with yourself who gave me being, (and how can I bring a fonder comparison) will you forgive me?—I see you are inclined to pity me, my father,—I will throw myself on your mercy. Ah! if you have not for-

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gotten the pangs you suffered when my dear departed mother was snatched from us, you will have compassion upon *me*, for I have lost one, to whom, before the face of heaven, I was bound by the tenderest of all ties,—I have lost a —husband !”

Now, Arthur, had I the pen of a ready writer, I would paint the different attitudes of surprise that the audience were thrown into, when the word “*husband*,” was faintly uttered. A word, that, with a kind of interrogatory emphasis, was so quickly repeated by every female round the room, that I could compare it to nothing but a *feu de joye*.

Without

Without entering too much into detail, I am not able to give you the remainder of the charming mourner's pathetic speech; in the course of which, she related the death of Mr. Ackland, who was drowned in her sight, in an attempt to convey her from the sea-coast, and to whom, it now appears, she had been privately married. Let it suffice, that her solemn and affectionate address to her father, her sighs and sobs, her streaming eyes, her throbbing bosom, her tender heart, all won upon me, in a manner I am not able to describe. Laugh if you will, — It was a piteous sight. — I was melted by her complaints, — they were full of resignation, — they were the precepts of virtue, delivered by the tongue of an angel. I shed the

tears of an infant. Until that moment, though I had always adored, I knew not how to love her. I now trembled, and felt my own unworthiness. As well could I have looked at the noon-day sun, as to have met the lightning of her eye. You will charge me with inconsistency, or hypocrisy; I care not, Arthur,—I tell you, I looked up to her as something superior to a mortal. I have ever since approached her with awe. My narrow soul is enlarged, my love is now

“A flame so holy and so clear,
“That the white taper leaves no foot
 behind,
“No smoke of lust.”

The

The main obstacle to my happiness is then at last removed. I have now no rival. Mr. Mortimer, my stedfast friend, is warmer in my interest than ever; and I have hopes that the charming Catharine will soon become flexible. At present, however, her mind will admit of none but sorrowful impressions. It seems indeed to "have that within which passes show."—She has resigned herself into the hands of providence, and being, as she imagines, certain that no evil can befall her, equal to the past, she is careless of her future fate. Sick of the world, she is always sighing for a retreat among rocks and caves, and unfrequented woods. These are pictures that for ever present themselves to the imagination of

the wretched; but they are mere deceptions, Arthur. They cheat us at a distance, but on a nearer approach, we are disgusted with the gross daubings of the pencil, and are ashamed at our own weakness, in being deluded by them. A little time will wear these images from her memory, and they will be succeeded by others more rational.— After all, Arthur, is she not the child of nature? To be ignorant of her charms and accomplishments, and to carry them from the world, are equally impossible. No convent in France ever yet held a young, blooming, and beautiful widow of nineteen. To prevent, however, the possibility of a second flight, Mr. Mortimer, who is of opinion that delays are dangerous, has

has fixed an early period for the consummation of my happiness, and his absolute commands have just been delivered to the beautiful mourner.

LETTER XXVII.

THE HONORABLE MISS PERCIVAL,

TO

CATHARINE.

Plymouth.

YES, my dear friend, I do most
sincerely sympathize with
your sorrows. My feelings are,
D 4 beyond

beyond all measure, shocked at your account of Mr. Mortimer's persecution.—While your tears are yet streaming for the loss of him who was so infinitely dear to you, to be insulted with the addresses of a wretch like Sir Edmund Chetwyn, nay, to be forced into his arms, and that by your own parent! is such an enormous violation of all delicacy, that I could not, without some difficulty, even give it credit.

But, be upon your guard, my dearest Catharine, do not consent to bring on your own irreparable ruin, under the idea of obedience to Mr. Mortimer. If the injunctions laid upon you exceed the bounds of prudence and justice, there can be no crime in refusing to comply with them

them. I wish not to mislead or to draw you from your duty,—but I am hurt and irritated. I am a woman, and feel the insult offered to my sex. You will excuse me if I do not hesitate to say, that a compliance with these unreasonable demands will not be an act of duty but of madness.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE,

AT GUERNSEY.

Cork, in Ireland.

SIR,

TO my utter surprize, I received a note yesterday morning,

ing, informing me that Mr. Ackland, your particular friend, lay dangerously ill, at the White-Hart, in this City. I went immediately to the Inn, and on enquiry was shewn into his room. As he was then in the height of a delirium, I was not able to get from him any rational account of himself; but from the attendants about him, I learnt, that he was landed here about six weeks ago, by a merchant ship bound to Barcelona, which had picked him up somewhere off the coast of Wales, where, it seems he had been unfortunately shipwrecked. He discovered no signs of life, nor was it until some days afterwards that he was restored to his speech and senses. On his arrival here, his health appeared to be somewhat repaired,

paired, but he has since been attacked by a violent nervous fever, owing, it is imagined, to his late agitation of body and mind. The Physicians, however, assure me, they entertain flattering hopes of his recovery.

I have thought it necessary to give you this intelligence, to quiet, in some measure, your fears on his account. In a few days I hope to send you better news. Mean time you may rest assured, that I shall pay him all possible regard and attention.

I am,

Your's, &c. &c.

J. Wenham.

LETTER XXIX.

COLONEL HARLEY,

TO THE

HONORABLE MISS PERCIVAL.

IS it possible that your information, respecting the unhappy Catharine can be well founded?—Surely, Charlotte, you write ironically, when you tell me, that she has at length yielded to the caprice of her father, and is on the point of being united to Sir Edmund Chetwyn. Is Mr. Mortimer really such a wretch as to sacrifice his only child to his ambition? You tell me, and you have often told me before

before, that your friend has a tender and susceptible heart. Alas! my dear Charlotte, in the whole catalogue of human miseries there is not a greater curse than a heart full of sensibility. Whoever possesses it cannot be said to possess himself. He has no will of his own. He is a mere feather, blown about by every varying gust of wind. Or rather, he is like sterling coin, which is full of intrinsic value, but we have it always in our power to melt it, and to give it what impression we please. Did not Catharine doat upon the late unfortunate Mr. Ackland, even to distraction? She had no life but in him, and is not her present grief as sincere and excessive, as her former fondness?

fondness? What then can Mr. Mortimer expect from this new alliance? He may poison the innocence and integrity of his child. With smiles and allurements he may soften her tender heart into obedience, and he may even force her, by threats, to impose a false passion upon the man, she most sincerely despises. Yet where can all this end, but in his own shame and disappointment, and her inevitable disgrace and ruin?—Whenever you have occasion to mention Mr. Mortimer again, call him not a parent. He has sullied—he has profaned the endearing title.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

FROM THE SAME.

YOUR last letter has given me spirits. The sudden indisposition of Sir Edmund Chetwyn's brother, Lord Montford, is a fortunate event. I cannot help drawing the most flattering hopes from this incident; especially as you tell me, that an express has arrived from Lord Montford, to summon Sir Edmund immediately to town. By these means your friend will, at least, gain a short respite, and it is not impossible that, during the baronet's absence, her tears and complaints

plaints may blunt the edge of Mr. Mortimer's cruelty. But there is another circumstance infinitely more favourable. Lord Montford, you observe, is past recovery. At his decease, the title and estates will, of course, descend to Sir Edmund Chetwyn. Who can tell what effect this sudden advance of rank and fortune will produce upon a temper so proud and vain as that of the Baronet? Will he not begin to reflect on what he has been doing? If so, reflection may probably bring on repentance.

Possessed of twelve thousand a year, and a coronet, he will, perhaps, look down with contempt on the daughter of a country gentleman,
who

who has no titles to boast of, and whose chief dowry will consist in her beauty.

To you, my dearest Charlotte, these notions may appear rather strained. I have, however, received some consolation from them, nay, I begin to exult, and am almost ready to promise you that there is an end to the sorrows of your lovely friend. You know, Charlotte, I have long turned over the volume of human nature. I frequently meet with characters which puzzle me, and sometimes am obliged to leave them unsolved, and pass on to another page. But the heart of Sir Edmund Chetwyn, I can read, with as much ease as I can repeat

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the alphabet, and if I am wrong in my conjecture, I give you leave never to trust me more.

Your mind, you say, is full of anxiety and concern, on account of Catharine, and you indeed appear to have lost your usual vivacity.— But I must insist on your no longer viewing things through so dark a medium. We have every thing to hope. The prospect brightens up, every object before us looks calm and chearful. I wish it were in my power to dissipate your inquietude. You ask me for a budget of court news and scandal, but I am unluckily barren of both, for a fortnight at least has passed, since I appeared in the precincts of St. James's — I never go to any *public places*, except

cept Vauxhall, where I sometimes saunter an hour or two for the purpose of studying characters. I went thither last night, when I was seduced into my old trade of *sonnet-teering*. I had lately taken up Mr. Gray's celebrated elegy, and as I sat ruminating upon it, in one of the remote boxes of the gardens, my evil genius tempted me to attempt a parody of it. By the bye, I am not very partial to parodies; however, I made a sort of devotional apology to the immortal bard, for the liberty I was going to take with him, and pulling out the pocket book and little silver-topped pencil which I once received from your snowy hand, I began to write

52 CATHARINE.

what I here send, merely to give
you a few minutes relaxation from
your anxiety.

E L E G Y,

WRITTEN IN

VAUXHALL-GARDENS.

THE hautboy sounds, soft prelude to
the song,

The nymphs fantastic swell the chearful
glee;

From each gay walk rush forth th' admi-
ring throng,

And leave this solitary seat—to me.

Now

Now takes each happy youth his silent stand,
And nought is heard but music's melting
airs;

Save where yon circle's whisper'd tales ex-
pand,

And flatt'ry sooths the list'ning maiden's
cares.

Within yon splendid dome, with pictures
lin'd,

Where sentimental lovers walk and weep;
On narrow benches at whole length reclin'd,
Inebriated swains in silence sleep.

The burst of laughter echoing through the
hall,

The loud and shrill ton'd wit of passing
beaux;

The wanton's giggle, and the watchman's
call,

Ne'er wake these drunkards from their
dead repose.

For them in vain resounds the tink'ling bell,
 That calls admiring cits to yonder shade,
 To view the mimic cottage and the mill,
 And all the wonders of the feign'd cascade !

Of! did the song to their loud clamours yield,
 Their cat-calls oft' e'en Shield's sweet
 strains have broke ;
 How march'd their legions o'er the well-
 fought field,
 How fell the lamps beneath their shivering
 stroke.

Let not ambition mock their useless toil,
 Or strive their great achievements to
 efface ;
 Nor prudence read, with a disdainful smile,
 The annals of this bold tumultuous race.

Perhaps on yonder seat is stretch'd along,
 Some bard, once pregnant with poetic
 fire ;

Some

Some rake, who, smitten with the love of
 song,
 Once wak'd to extacy the living lyre.

But giddy fashion now has fill'd his soul,
 With joys the tuneful nine could ne'er
 impress;
 The smiting maids fill high the spark'ling
 bowl,
 And bids him shun all studies but to dress.

Some city *Elliot*, skill'd in arms and arts,
 Some mute inglorious *Hayley* here may
 rest;
 Some modern *Pindar*, who, his comic darts,
 Ne'er dar'd to level at his sov'reign's
 breast.

Beneath yon trees, with glitt'ring lights
 o'erspread,
 Contending swains renew their clam'rous
 broil;

36 CATHARINE.

And oft a streaming face, and fractur'd
head,
Provoke the passing censure of a smile.

Oft are the bowls descending to the ground,
Or whirl'd in shapeless atoms through
the air ;
And many a broken glass is strew'd around;
To shew what Bachanalians have been
there !

For thee, who mindful of this jovial throng,
Dost in these artless lines their tale relate;
If chance, yon bright illumin'd walks among,
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate.

Haply some hoary headed rake may say,
Full oft, with pleasure have I seen him
rove
Amidst these paths, at the decline of day,
When *Wrighten's* silver voice inspir'd
the grove.

There

There, at the foot of yon majestic beech,
 That rears its lamp-besprinkled arms so
 high;
 His listless length at midnight would he
 stretch,
 And gaze at citizens that babbled by.

Hard by yon *petit-maitres* would he sit,
 A cold collation then before him spread;
 And laugh to see them, as a stroke of wit,
 Hurl green glass bottles at the waiter's
 head.

One eve I miss him, in this still retreat,
 Along the walks, and near his fav'rite
 tree;
 Another came; nor at his custom'd seat,
 Nor in the grove, nor painted hall was
 he.

The next his eulogy, and hist'ry brought,
 His faults forgot, his errors smooth'd
 with praise;

From

38 CATHARINE.

From crouds like these, from cities far re-
mote,

He passes now the ev'ning of his days.

LETTER XXXI.

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE,

TO

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN.

IF thou hast not already heard
good news, Edmund, I am
going to tell thee some. A coalition
having been formed between the
gout and a certain beautiful little
wench, of our acquaintance, they
have both together, after a long
struggle, gotten complete dominion
over

over the Herculean Peer, thy brother, and he is now on the point of making his bow, and turning his back upon this insignificant world. The agreeable intelligence has just been brought to *Brooks's*, where I am now busily employed at the Pharo-table; but having always an eye to thy interest, as well as my own, I have snatched five minutes, in order to dispatch this packet.— Thou wilt, of course, come instantly to town, though the chances are so much against thy finding Lord Montford in a “breathing state,” that a sporting friend of mine, has just taken a hundred guineas, to pay ten for every hour he lives. I may therefore, with safety congratulate thee on thy new acquisition of rank
and

60 CATHARINE.

and fortune, and remain, with all
imaginable respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient, and

Most devoted Servant,

A. Collins.

LETTER XXXII.

TO GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE,

AT GUERNSEY.

SIR,

Cork, &c.

I HAVE great pleasure in ac-
quainting you, that Mr. Ack-
land

land is so far recovered, that his physicians have allowed him to travel. He is going to embark immediately for Wales, whither, he informs me, he is called by the most pressing and importunate business.

I am,

Your's, &c. &c.

J. Wenham.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

YOU must excuse me, Arthur. Before the receipt of your friendly letter, I had been summoned by several expresses to Montford-House, but I most certainly shall not be in such haste to set forward as you imagine. It is true that my fortune, in some measure, depends upon the journey. At all events, however, a profusion of wealth and titles will soon be showered upon me. I am now desirous
of

of securing my *future* happiness, and that I can do only by staying here. You know of the accident that lately happened. Did not the dear fugitive escape from my embraces, at the very moment in which I thought her most secure? To prevent a similar disappointment, I have, long ago, made an irrevocable vow, never to stir a single step from this spot until she is mine for ever. My journey will consequently be delayed till the day from which I am to date my happiness. That day I hope is not a distant one, for Mr. Mortimer has at length prevailed upon, or rather compelled his lovely daughter to appoint the period of our nuptials. This morning, however, she made a grand attempt to cancel the obligation,

ligation, but her scheme was defeated, merely by my superior abilities of intrigue. You know, Arthur, that in the gay circles of fashion, I was always celebrated for a sort of melting language, that never failed to soften, if not to inflame the female breast. It is somewhat strange that I have not been able to make the like impressions on the heart of Catharine. We have been walking together in the garden.—You are sure I condemned every rose, and every violet that we passed, as mere foils to her beauty. The curling vines, the gay blossoms, the blushing fruit, furnished me with tender allusions, but they were allusions which she did not care to understand. I determined to be more explicit.

“I

"I have just heard the rapturous tidings, said I, my dearest Catharine, that you have at last condescended to fix the joyful hour, in which I am to conduct you to yonder spot," pointing to the village-church, which appeared over an adjoining shrubbery.

"Has then Mr. Mortimer, Sir, said she, with some surprise, told you what lately passed between us."

"He has told me, my amiable friend, I replied, that you promised him to relinquish——"

"I understand you, Sir, said Catharine, interrupting me. It is true I made him a promise, but you know not in what a cruel man-

ner that promise was extorted from me. Neither will you ever know it. It is enough if I tell you that I cannot, for a moment, think of fulfilling it."

"Have I been so much deceived? After all my fond hopes, am I, at last, to be made so completely wretched? — Is this gleam of joy that surrounded me, so soon overcast by a cloud of sorrow? — Think again, my sweet friend. — It is your father to whom this solemn assurance has been made. Do you know the consequence of sporting with a man so irritable, so violent as Mr. Mortimer?"

"Alas! Sir, the consequence is well known to me. It is dreadful
in

in the extreme. I look forward to it with fear and horror. From my offended father, I expect no mercy. He will load me with shame and poverty, spurn me off, and send me forth, a helpless wanderer through the world. He will harden his heart against me, nor will he shed a single tear for all my sufferings."

"Forbear this language, and let me intreat you, by all that is fond and respectful, to fly into these arms for protection from such cruelties."

"Ah! said she, looking upon me with a degree of tenderness which I had never before experienced from her, what can I expect

from one who has hitherto been my only persecutor?"

"Recal that last word,—It is too much. You know not the sincerity of my passion, — You know not the feelings of this faithful heart, that now trembles at your severity. Never will I deceive you, if you will rely upon my faith,—upon my generosity. I feel a conscious virtue within, that tells me I shall have pride in shewing my gratitude. I swear ever to approach you with love, respect, and awful homage."

"It is impossible that I can any longer mistrust you," cried this amiable creature, while her eyes glistered with tears. "I now throw myself

myself on your protection. To my dearest friend have I sued in vain for compassion. I knelt, and wept before him. Alas! I had not the power to melt him into pity. He was too harsh, too cruel!—But let me not complain of my beloved father. Had he *felt* my miseries, he would have relieved them, but he thought they were all ideal and visionary. You, Sir, I trust, will view them in a more favourable light, for I am going to lay open my whole heart before you; and to make you my judge. You have promised to be generous, — from *you*, therefore, I expect that mercy which was denied me by my only parent.

Sir

Sir Edmund, I am about to speak with candour and sincerity. You have long followed me with a fatal passion. I believe your professions sincere, and therefore pity you from my very soul; but, believe me, I can never go further. Sir, I will not scruple to tell you, that this heart is not a stranger to the tenderest of all passions. I was once blest in the love of one, whose name I cannot mention without tears! — Heaven formed us for each other. We were united, — we struggled with our misfortunes; but so strongly were we knitted together, by mutual affection, that even under misfortunes we were happy. Yet we were mortals, and our bliss was but of short duration. Three months have not yet passed, since I lost
this

this dear companion. Three little months! — Ah! judge, if it be possible, for my aching bosom to receive a fresh impresson. My mind revolts at the hated idea! — It is beyond measure shocking! — Sir Edmund, if you pursue your suit for ever, it is not in my nature to love you. Beware then, how I am cruelly forced into your arms. — But I rely on your generosity. With joy I accept your proffered terms of friendship. You have now a glorious opportunity of displaying your liberality. Give up all pretensions to a heart, that never can be your's, and I will bless you for ever. I here receive you as my best and dearest friend."

So

So saying, she wiped the trickling tears from her cheeks, and directing her eyes towards me, with an air of sweetness and modesty, held out her beautiful white hand, as a signal of reconciliation.

I dared not to touch it, Arthur! What a rack did I endure! Never was miserable wretch in such a dilemma. My whole heart was inflamed, while she continued to stand in the same sweet supplicatory attitude. My blood throbbing in my veins. My hand moved towards hers,—I was on the point of seizing the tempting gift, but I recollected the conditions on which it was offered. It was like the enticing fruit of Paradise, my bane was in the touch!—What was to be

'be done? I was now fairly caught in my own snare. I, however, extricated myself, by a bold and well-timed effort. Pretending to mistrust Mr. Mortimer, as the author of my disappointment, I affected a most violent fit of anger: "Can I trust my senses, I exclaimed, how different is all this from what I expected, after the assurances that have so recently been given me! But I see through the imposition. It is too apparent. Mr. Mortimer has most grossly deceived me. I am a dupe to his arts. It is my own fault, however, if I am any longer trifled with. — No! — I will have an immediate explanation. — My vengeance shall instantly overtake him. He shall not escape me, by heaven."

While

While I was speaking, I clapped my hand several times, as if involuntarily on the handle of my sword. Without waiting for an answer, I leaped over some Chinese paling, which separates one side of the garden from the park, and ran towards the house.

“Hold, Sir, cried the affrighted Catharine, stretching her arms over the rails, you will not leave me thus! for heaven’s sake, return, and receive the explanation from *me*, for I alone am to be blamed.”

This was precisely what I wanted. I stepped back, when she thus proceeded.

“Indeed,

“Indeed, Mr. Mortimer deserves no censure. He has not told you a syllable but what is the strictest truth. In a fatal hour, I made him the promise which I have just recanted.”

“Ah! cruel and unkind! But it is to him, that I am to look for the performance of his engagement, and by heaven and earth ——.”

“Remember, Sir, she interrupted, you have just cautioned *me* against the terrible consequences of trifling with Mr. Mortimer’s turbulent disposition.”

“Trifling! — I repeated, in great confusion, for I here felt really hurt,—good God, you do not mean
to

to intimidate me! You cannot think me a coward! But I will prove, at least, that your suspicions are ill grounded."

"One moment more, I beseech you, rejoined Catharine, you have entirely misconceived me."

"Not another instant! — My *honour* is now in question. Have you not said—."

"Alas! I know not what I have said. Oh! for one grain of pity."

"It is too late."

"Am I then, said she, so vile a wretch, as to become the destroyer of my parent? No, unkind as he hath been
been

been to me, it is my duty to protect my dear father from your barbarity. If I *must* suffer, I will suffer alone. Sir Edmund, you may make your peace with Mr. Mortimer. I here agree, she continued, (blushing and fixing her downcast eyes upon the ground) I here agree to ratify the fatal promise. My last hopes of succour are now lost. Ah! where shall I hide my confusion."

"In these faithful arms," said I, catching her eagerly to my bosom. "Precious creature, never will I give you cause to repent."

The conclusion of my speech, you will easily imagine, was all rapture and extravagance, full of "rosy
fettors

fetters and fantastic chains."—Now, Arthur, I have only to add, that if I suffer her to escape me again, then am I the errantest coxcomb that ever followed a petticoat.

LETTER XXXIV.

MR. ACKLAND,

TO

GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE,

AT GUERNSEY.

AFTER so many friendly enquiries, you will have much pleasure in hearing that I am arrived in Wales. When I tell you that only a few short miles now divide me

me from my dearest Catharine, you will judge of my anxiety. I am haunted by a thousand fears and sorrowful predictions. If she should have put the worst construction on my late accident, how fatal will be the consequence! What hopes, indeed, could she entertain of my escape, after the vessel was wrecked before her eyes? When last I saw her, she was standing by the sea-side, with out stretched arms, filling the shore with her piteous cries. I endeavoured to encourage her, by waving my hand, but in the attempt, quitted my hold of the rock to which I had clung,—sunk, and saw her no more. Who can say, what dreadful impressions such an affecting sight may have fixed upon
her

her tender mind? or what horrid resolutions she may have taken, in the height of her despair. But why should I anticipate?

I mean to proceed instantly to the wood, which I shall enter by the private path to which she formerly directed me. Should I find her living, what a joyful, an extatic moment!—But if ————— then, my dear friend, farewell. At all events, her fate shall determine mine.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

FROM THE SAME.

WITH all my assiduity and attention, I have not yet been able to explore this secret path. Twice have I walked round the wood. I have lifted every bush and every bramble, within my reach, but can find no passage.— The under-wood is every where thick and inaccessible. I have made enquiries at the cottage, on the side of the wood. When I mention the name of Catharine, the cottagers assume the most profound ignorance, and answer all my questions by a general stare of surprise.

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LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

FROM THE SAME.

I FEAR I have lost her eternally. Having lately rambled down to the sea-side, in hopes of discovering a particular knot of trees, in the wood, which she once described. I stopped at the place where my unfortunate vessel was wrecked.

"This, said I, is the very spot on which she stood, and that fatal rock —," I was proceeding in my soliloquy, when I observed something like a handkerchief lying on

on the beech, which apparently had been washed on shore by the tide. When I examined it more closely, how was my mind agitated! It was a muslin shawl, that once belonged to the unhappy Catharine. This very shawl, for I have it now in my hand, was the first trifling pledge of our love. The day when I presented it to her, I shall never forget. "This is a gift (said she on receiving it) which I shall always prize, and never will I part with it, but with my existence." Too well, I fear, she has verified her promise. In the attempt to save *my* life she has lost her own. "And art thou still contented to live," you will exclaim. Wilt thou not follow thy faithful Catharine? Follow her to more happy abodes, where ——"

Hold,

Hold, my friend! I swear, — but why should I swear. My conjectures are perhaps ill founded. When I find them otherwise, I will not exist another instant, not even to bid you a final adieu!

LETTER XXXVII.

FROM THE SAME.

ALL my endeavours to come at the truth, are still unsuccessful. The cottagers, I am now convinced, are really ignorant of the whole affair. They do not even know

know that there is such a place as a private dwelling in the wood.— When I attempted to describe it, they laughed at my credulity.— This family are new inhabitants.— I have learnt, with regret, that the old man, who was the staunch friend of Catharine, has lately been discharged for disobedience to the commands of Mr. Mortimer. He is, however, they tell me, somewhere in the neighbourhood. From this information I draw some hopes, as (should my fears which have arisen from the circumstance of the shawl, be without foundation) it is probable that he may still administer to her necessities. Perhaps I may be able to find out this old man, at least, I am resolved not to

relax in my researches. Among the cottagers I have taken up a temporary residence, and shall not depart without conviction. A hundred times a day I wander round the wood, and have even penetrated a considerable way among the shrubs and bushes. When hidden among the thick trees, I call on the name of Catharine, setting up the most loud and vehement shouts, in hopes that she may hear my well-known voice. Sometimes I imagine she answers to my cries, but on repeating them, find myself deceived by a distant echo. In attempting to find out the hidden passage to her retreat, that leads from the cottage-garden, I have been equally unprosperous. In short, every thing now before me is suspense and uncertainty, and
the

the opposite passions of hope and fear, alternately govern my disordered mind.

LETTER XXXVIII.

SIR EDMUND CHETWYN,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

THE joyful day is at length arrived! I am this moment bound for the village church. This house is now a scene of festivity. Not a gloomy face is to be seen, except that of the charming bride, who is still sorrowful and

G 4 dejected.

dejected. She had made another pathetic appeal to my passions, you may easily guess with what success.

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

Farewel! — Our party begins to move forward. What would you give to see the procession. We are headed by the vicar, and the parish-clerk (the exact counter part of Sancho Pancha) strutting behind his double chin, brings up the rear. For myself, you are sure I make a respectable figure in this rural pageant, but as to Catharine, she is literally a *mourning bride*. Passing on with feeble steps, beating her lovely bosom, and wiping her gushing

ing tears from her cheeks. I can compare her only to the Grecian Emily, following the corpse of her beloved Arcite to the funeral pile. However, Arthur, I am a novice in the art of gallantry, if when the ceremony is past, I cannot banish this ill-timed *unmatrimonial* sorrow from her bosom, and soothe and flatter her into a better humour, I shall then address her in the language of my prototype, the gay Sir Harry Wildair.

“I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect, and now, Madam, we may dance, and sing, and love, in good earnest.”

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. ACKLAND,

TO

GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE.

MY prediction was too true. She is lost for ever. Undoubtedly the cruel waves from which I escaped, have overwhelmed her. After much toil and difficulty I have found out her late habitation. Happening this morning to see through some boughs, a small cavity near the edge of the wood, I immediately had my suspicions, and borrowing an axe from the cottage, I cut away some low shrubs and prickly
ly

ly bushes, when I soon found myself in a close passage. I passed on till I came to an open spot, where I observed, under a clump of birch-trees, a little clay-built hut. Good God, what were my feelings — “Catharine! my only Catharine!” I exclaimed, as I approached, in accents that rung through the wood. No answer was returned. I entered the hut, but how shall I describe the deadly pang that tore my bosom, when I found the dear inhabitant was gone. What a melancholy scene was here. A pen was lying near an ink-stand, on a deal table, under the window, with which she had apparently been writing, just before she left the hut. The floor was strewn with papers, among them I found the following fragment,

ment of a letter, which the dear sufferer had written to her friend, during the dreadful storm. This fragment has too well convinced me of her fate.*

“Charlotte, he must inevitably
 “perish. The vessel is surely dashed
 “to pieces. Even at this distance,
 “methinks I hear his dreadful
 “shrieks, — I cannot stir to his re-
 “lief, — I am enveloped in general
 “darkness, except when a burst of
 “lightning affords me a transient
 “view of the surrounding objects.
 “Again I hear the dreadful cries of
 “the mariners. Ah! my dear lord, a
 “timorous, weak, and helpless wo-
 “man, what assistance can I give
 “you,

* See the First Volume, Page 129.

“you, in this hour of distress?—

“But why do I stay here in safety?

“If I cannot assist you, I can *die*

“*with you*.—I come! — In spite of

“lightnings, storms and whirlwinds,

“I come.—I will hang over you

“in death.—*We will, at least, perish*

“*together!*—”

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

Do you mark the concluding lines? “We will, at least, perish together.” Can there be a stronger proof of the fatal resolution she took in that despairing moment?—What then remains for me, but to pursue my dreadful purpose. Alas! I want courage! I find, at last, that I am

a coward. A thousand times I have resolved, and as often shrunk back with horror from the deed. With all my imperfections on my head I dare not rush into the presence of my Maker.

LETTER XL.

CATHARINE,

TO THE

HONORABLE MISS PERCIVAL.

H EAVEN has, at last, filled up the measure of my sorrows, and never more, in this world, shall I look for happiness!

LETTER

LETTER XLI.

MR. MORTIMER,

T O

I. LLANDAFF, ESQUIRE.

TO see my daughter united with a man of family, has ever been the wish nearest my heart. That wish is now fully accomplished, for Catharine was this morning married to Sir Edmund Chetwyn. Our joy on the occasion, however, has been interrupted by an extraordinary express that has arrived from Lord Montford, who lies at the point of death. Sir Edmund
was

was met by this unwelcome messenger as he was returning from church. On reading a letter which was presented to him, he turned pale, and seemed extremely confused. Its contents he did not think proper to communicate; but, turning to Catharine, with an air of disappointment and dejection, while his countenance betrayed a heart full of anguish, informed her, "they were doomed to undergo a short separation, for that he was obliged to sett off instantly for London." I was sorry, but not surprised, to see Catharine receive this information with a most insulting look of triumph and disdain. Sir Edmund, although severely punished by her disrespectful behaviour, pretended not to observe it, but took a most affectionate

affectionate leave of his bride, in vain attempting to melt into tenderness a heart, still colder than ice. He then took me aside, and, after assuring me that his absence could not, at the farthest, be extended to more than four days, he threw himself into the carriage, which brought the messenger, and was out of sight in an instant.

I am since informed, that the death of Lord Montford is inevitable. My son-in-law will, of course, return loaded with wealth and titles, and I shall have the exquisite pleasure of saluting my daughter by the name of Lady Montford.

LETTER XLII.

MR. ACKLAND,

TO

GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE,

AT GUERNSEY.

DID not I promise you that the moment which confirmed my doubts, should be the last of my existence? How weak is human resolution! I am now almost persuaded of the miserable fate that has attended my dearest Catharine.—I have searched her late habitation for fresh proofs.—Every thing serves to strengthen my opinion, that she
is

Catharine

CATHARINE. 99

Cath.
is gone for ever. And yet I am contented to live, or rather to drag on my wretched existence a little longer. My mind is governed by a strange impulsive power, which I know not how to describe. In the midst of the gloomy regions of despair, I seem to perceive something like a fluttering ray of hope.

An habitual fondness for solitude is stealing upon me, and I am come to a determination (which you perhaps will call improper and unreasonable) of passing the rest of my days in this wood. I have taken up my residence in the hut, which lately held my dear companion. My brown bread is brought me daily from the cottage, and I drink from the clear pebbly stream, that wan-

ders through the wood,—in short, my life is the life of a hermit.—There is not a spot in the whole world so well suited to my present disposition. Here I have room for “meditation even to madness.”—Wherever I turn my eyes, I find some relic that reminds me of the unhappy Catharine. The papers that lie scattered on the floor, the verses carved on the surrounding trees, the drawings and sketches that adorn the walls of the hut, all fill my mind with fond ideas. The following inscriptions I have selected from a thousand others.

On the tallest of the three birch-trees, before the door, are inscribed the following words.

CATHARINE ACKLAND

FIRST BECAME

An Inhabitant of this solitary Mansion,

ON THE

TWENTY NINTH OF MAY,

1787.

——“ Then was this place,

“ A happy rural seat of various view,

“ Groves, whose rich trees wept odours,
gums and balms;

“ Others, whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,

“ Hung amiable. Hesperian fables true,

“ If true here only, and of delicious taste.

“ A wilderness of sweets ! for nature here

“ Wanton'd,

"Wanton'd, as in her prime, and play'd at
will

"Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more
sweet,

"Wild above rule, or art, enormous bliss ;

"Flowers of all hue, and without thorn,
the rose."

Under the little window that
fronts the sea-shore, I found these
words, written upon the clay-wall.
with a black lead pencil.

"On the morning of the first of
"June, one thousand seven hun-
"dred and eighty seven, from the
"window of my hut, I saw, for the
"first time in my life, the rising sun.
"What a glorious spectacle !

"These

"These are thy works, parent of good,
 "Almighty, thine this universal frame,
 "Thus wond'rous fair, thyself how wondrous then,
 "Unspeakable, who sit'st above the heavens,
 "To us invisible, or dimly seen
 "Through these thy lowest works, yet these declare
 "Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine."

At some future hour, my dear friend, I may, perhaps, be able to give you a fuller description of this little hermitage, in which I intend to devote my future life, to the fond and grateful remembrance of the unfortunate Catharine.

LETTER XLIII.

MR. MORTIMER,

TO

I. LLANDAFF, ESQUIRE.

MY Son-in-law has written to inform me that his noble brother is no more. Sir Edmund (now Lord Montford) adds, that all his family affairs will be settled in a few days, to his entire satisfaction, after which he means to return immediately to Llaughlern-Abbey. The same express has brought an affectionate letter from his Lordship to Catharine, but, to my great surprise, she appears not much elated with

with these new honours. For myself, I have at length arrived at the summit of my ambition. I am now the father of a Peer, and if the remainder of my days be not full of happiness, it is surely my own fault. Thus much, at least, is certain,—Since the ennoblement of my family, I have found a great change in my disposition. My ideas appear to be elevated in proportion to my rank in life; my breast expands with pleasure, and I seem to swell with my own dignity. But remember that this is told you in confidence. Amidst all my triumphs, however, I am sorry I am not able to remove the weight of sorrow that hangs heavy on the mind of Lady Catharine Montford, my daughter. Her spirits, though never

ver remarkably vivid, are now more depressed than ever. I have persuaded her to hunt with us, a few mornings, in hopes that her melancholy will be relieved by air and exercise, so that she may be able to meet her Lord, on his return, with some degree of spirit and propriety.

LETTER XLIV.

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE,

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE LORD MONTFORD.

THERE cannot possibly be a better apology than that which
your

your lordship has made, for forfeiting your engagement. I have submitted it to your friends, who are of the unanimous opinion, that the first embraces of a blushing and beautiful bride, are incitements far more powerful than any they can urge for your stay in town. They have therefore agreed to dispense with your lordship's agreeable company, this evening, upon one special condition, that is, your lordship shall promise to join them again, immediately after you have paid your first devoirs to the Cyprian goddess.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

CATHARINE,

T O

THE HONOURABLE MISS PERCIVAL.

GRACIOUS God! what have I done?—I am full of shame, confusion, and conscious guilt. — I have a dreadful tale to tell my Charlotte.—Where shall I fly from these pangs, and frightful horrors, that rend my suffering bosom?—

In Continuation.

I will strive to be more composed, my dear friend. You shall know

know the extent of my misfortunes, and then judge if I be not the most miserable of all guilty creatures, under heaven.

In Continuation.

I have been praying for patience under my sufferings. My petition is heard, — I am all resignation. — Now let me tell you the cause of this new solicitude.

In obedience to his desire, I this morning hunted with Mr. Mortimer. In a little thicket, not far from the Abbey, we started a fox, which took its course towards the sea-side. Having rode with such speed that my strength was almost exhausted, I found it necessary to
slacken

slacken my pace, and therefore quitted the hounds just as they were running opposite to the Wood of Llewellyn! I immediately made towards the *well-known* cottage, by the side of the wood, in order to get some little refreshment. By the new inhabitants, I was treated with much civility, but I could not forget my good old benefactor. — While I was straying in the cottage-garden, and musing over the past melancholy scenes, I was impressed with a strong and unconquerable desire to visit my late habitation. The secret path from the garden being perfectly known to me, I took an opportunity (while the cottagers were all busily employed within doors) of removing the loose branches of the trees that covered the

the hidden path, and without much difficulty entered the wood. The hut was nearly in the same state as when I quitted it, but to my great surprise, the muslin shawl which had been torn from my bosom, and blown into the sea, by the furious winds on that sorrowful day, when I went to the assistance of my unfortunate husband, I now found, lying on a table, in the hut, carefully folded up in a sheet of writing paper, on which were written these words.

“ My most precious remembrancer.”

What were my emotions on reading this inscription? It was the hand writing of Mr. Ackland! I could have sworn to the characters.

ters. I was astonished,—confounded!—But scarce had I time for a minute's reflection, before I observed, through the little window of the hut, a man with a book in his hand, crossing the green space before the door. Surprised and terrified beyond measure, I gave a loud shriek, and instantly fainted.—When I recovered from my swoon, the stranger was bending over me, in a most affectionate attitude. I looked up to him for mercy. Great God!—how did I survive that trying moment? I beheld the face of my dearest George! Both lost in equal consternation, we stared wildly at each other. We mutually attributed this wonderful scene to the power of magic, and neither of us
dared

dared to utter the first word, lest the charm should be broken. After we had spent some moments in this awful silence, Mr. Ackland ventured to exclaim, in the most impassioned tone of voice,

“If it be only a beautiful illusion before me, I will not complain, but if thou art really the best beloved of my soul, for heaven’s sake speak, for I can no longer endure this painful uncertainty.”

“Oh! my dear friend!” I cried, in faltering accents—I could not finish the sentence. The rest of my words died imperfect on my tongue.

“Enough, said he, I am convinced
Vol. II. I by

by that sweet voice, thou art indeed my Catharine."

"Father of heaven, receive the thanks of this grateful heart," I cried, falling on my knees, and bursting into tears.—Then turning to Mr. Ackland, "I will not now, I continued, ask you by what wonderful means your precious life has been preserved, after I saw you sink beneath the waves. I have only to rejoice that, by a miracle of heaven, you are thus restored to my fond bosom, and to pray without ceasing, that we may no more experience the dreadful pangs of separation."

"Sweetest and most amiable of women, he answered, I have already joined in the petition. And now
let

let me satisfy my ardent desire of holding thee, once more, with all thy beauties, within these wedded arms." Scarce had he spoken, when he snatched me with eagerness to his throbbing breast.

'Till that instant I was so overpowered with happiness, that I had not once reflected on my late fatal marriage. Gracious God! what horrid thoughts now rushed upon my wounded soul! — I started from his embraces, lifted my eyes and hands towards heaven, and stood in an agony of despair. Mr. Ackland observed me, with amazement.

"Strive to be more calm, my sweet friend, he cried, what is the
I 2 cause

cause of this sudden perturbation."

"I dare not reveal it — Leave me, I charge you, leave me."

"Never! — Never, Catharine, will we again be parted."

"Ah! how are you deceived! — You know not what a dreadful impediment divides us. Little do you imagine how faithless and ungrateful I have been. Little do you suspect how strangely I am altered since last we saw each other. Once more, I conjure you to depart, for I cannot live in your sight. My cheeks redden with shame, and my poor bosom is torn in pieces by the stings of guilt."

"What

"What can this mean? rejoined Mr. Ackland, I begin to tremble for your senses."

"Oh! that they were fled forever. Then should I be free from the reproaches of a wounded conscience."

"No more of this. Keep me no longer on the rack, but unfold your imaginary sorrows, that I may be able to give you advice and healing comfort."

"It is too late! Your council will now be fruitless. I have done a deed that has involved us both in eternal ruin."

"Come to my arms then, thou dearest of thy sex, and we will share our miseries together, for, while I thus press you to my faithful heart——"

"Hold off, Sir," I cried with the utmost vehemence, at the same time struggling to get free. "Once more I tell you, we must never meet again. There is horror in the thought — I am now the *wife of Sir Edmund Cbetwyn*."

"What have you said," exclaimed Mr. Ackland, in a most solemn and pathetic manner, quitting my hand, and turning pale with terror.

"I cannot repeat the fatal truth, I replied, we are both undone for ever.

ever. Yet be assured, I have not erred intentionally. Fortune only, and our cruel stars, have been the cause of all this wretchedness. — After bewailing your loss with the bitterest of tears — when, in a fatal hour I yielded, unwillingly and with terror yielded to the cruel commands of Mr. Mortimer, and gave Sir Edmund ——.”

“No more of that, Catharine, he interrupted. Do not repeat the hated name of Sir Edmund Chetwyn, lest in the height of my fury and resentment I pierce your unfaithful heart.”

“It would be a generous act, I replied. Alas! I have already lived too long. I ask but for a few mi-

minutes more of existence, that I may acquit myself to you, and to heaven. Do not frown so disdainfully upon me. I cannot bear those terrible, those frightful looks. I here assert my innocence.—While we were blest with each other, did I not ever love you with increasing passion? and since your supposed decease, heaven has been the witness of my unbounded sorrow. My days and nights have been wasted in the ——”

“Arms of my accursed rival,” cried Mr. Ackland, interrupting me.

“No! — Indeed you do me wrong. My heart has ever detested Sir Edmund Chetwyn, as much as
it

it has doated and still dotes upon you, the object of my affections. It is true, I have been compelled to give my hand to him, but I have never seen him since the horrid ceremony passed, and I would die rather than submit to his embraces."

"Then all is well, exclaimed Mr. Ackland, and we are still the happiest of mortals." Thus saying, he once more caught me in his arms.

"This must not be," I cried, struggling with all my power to release myself—"Suffer me, I conjure you, to depart."

"Unkind and barbarous! You would not surely leave me in this manner."

"Remember

“Remember my dreadful situation. Am I not the *wife of another*? I will not stay one instant more, lest I draw down the vengeance of heaven on my head.” I then broke from him, flew out of the hut, and ran through the wood, towards the cottage-garden. Mr. Ackland followed and overtook me in an instant. A violent conflict now ensued, the termination of which was for some time doubtful. We alternately upbraided and justified each other. At length, after shewing the immediate danger we were in, of being discovered by Mr. Mortimer, who was then in the neighbourhood, and the dreadful consequences that must of course follow such a discovery, I was suffered to depart, but not until I had given
Mr.

Mr. Ackland a most sacred promise to repair again to the wood, within three days at farthest, in company with a female friend, in whom I could place the strictest confidence. What are his motives for so strenuously urging this interview, what good purpose it can possibly answer, or what will be its event, heaven only knows.—May I add, my Charlotte, that now you are away, I have no friend on earth whom I can trust, as my companion, on this dangerous expedition. Never before did I so much stand in need of your advice and assistance.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

THE HONOURABLE MISS PERCIVAL,

TO

CATHARINE.

I UNDERSTAND you perfectly. —
But you shall not long be
friendless. After the receipt of this,
you may expect me, hourly, at
Llaughlarn-Abbey.

LETTER

LETTER XLVII.

LORD MONTFORD,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

YOU know where Orpheus went for his wife. But my journey will, probably, be a much longer one, than that of the Thracian bard, and my perils and sufferings will infinitely exceed those which he encountered, before I am in quiet possession of my charming bride. My mortal enemy, that monster the gout, with huge gigantic strides followed me from town, and though I drove with all possible speed,

speed, he overtook me before I arrived at the end of the third stage. And here I am, Arthur, with all my nobility, in a most piteous dilemma, at a paltry ale-house, within a few miles of Salisbury. Setting aside the two last lines, which I hope are not quite in point, Pope's verses on the Duke of Buckingham, will furnish you with an exact description of my present sorry and *unlordly* condition.

In the worst Inn's worst room, with mat
half hung,
The floor's of plaister, and the walls of
dung;
On, once a flock-bed, but repair'd with
straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to
draw:

The

The George and garter dangling from that
 bed,
 Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
 Great Villiers lies.--Alas! how chang'd
 from him,
 That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim.
 Gallant and gay, in Clivedon's proud alcove,
 The bow'r of wanton Shrewsbury and love.

Or just as gay in council, in a ring
 Of mimic statesmen and their merry king;
 No wit to flatter, left of all his store,
 No fool to laugh at, which he valued more.
 There, victor of his health, of fortune,
 friends,
 And fame, this Lord of useless thousands
 ends!

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

THE HONORABLE MISS PERCIVAL,

TO

COLONEL HARLEY.

YOU expect a whole packet of news, Colonel, but you will be miserably disappointed. All I can tell you at present is, that I yesterday arrived safe at the Abbey, that the return of Lord Montford is hourly expected, and that I am going, this very moment, to accompany my unhappy friend on her secret expedition.

LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

LORD MONTFORD,

TO

ARTHUR COLLINS, ESQUIRE.

Bath.

THE date of this letter will inform you, that I am nearly at the end of my journey. My gout has politely left me, and I am now full of life, hope, and spirits. In a few hours, Catharine, the sweet Catharine, will be preſt in theſe arms, and I ſhall ſoon taſte the delicious fruit which I have ſo long laboured to attain.

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K

LETTER

LETTER L.

THE HONORABLE MISS PERCIVAL,

TO

COLONEL HARLEY.

Llaughlern-Abbey.

“**I** SHALL never see her more.”
exclaimed a voice, as we approached, arm in arm, towards a little
clay, hut in the middle of the wood.
At the well-known sound my lovely
friend trembled and turned pale.

“I cannot stir a step farther,
Charlotte, said she, staggering, and
catching

catching hold of the branch of a ycamore-tree. By this time our steps had alarmed Mr. Ackland. The hut door flew open, and in an instant he was kneeling at the feet of Catharine.

“This is kindly done,” said he, hastily, while a transient blush of joy flowed over his wild and ghastly countenance.

I was going to answer for Catharine, who was speechless, and in tears, when he thus proceeded.

“Had you come a moment later, my only friend, you would have been the witness of a dreadful scene. For I had formed a resolution, which, unless your answer to the proposal

I am about to make, should prove favourable and indulgent, I am still determined to——."

Already alarmed, I was resolved not to hear the conclusion of this speech, and therefore interrupted Mr. Ackland, by requesting him to be as brief as possible, in whatever he had to say to my friend, as our visit must necessarily be short.

He bowed and thanked me,—
"I will not now, said he, utter a word respecting the late dreadful marriage, the very idea of it is monstrous, and freezes my soul with horror. Since last we parted, Catharine, I have employed my time in forming the only plan by which we can be relieved from our miserable

able situation. What I mean to propose is an immediate flight to Guernsey, where we shall rest secure from the interventions of Lord Montford and Mr. Mortimer. — There is no time to deliberate. — I have made interest with some fishermen, on the coast, a boat has been procured, and every thing is prepared for our departure. Nothing but your consent is now necessary.”

“It is impossible that I can ever consent to such a contrivance,” answered Catharine.

“Enough, said the dejected Ackland, my eternal happiness or misery depended on your reply. If we are no more to live together, I shall, at least, have the satisfac-

tion of *dying* in your presence.”—
 He then ran into the hut, and in
 a moment returned, holding in his
 hand a loaded pistol. “I have but
 one favour more to ask, he conti-
 nued, grant me but a last embrace,
 and I am gone for ever.”

“Let me conjure you, Catha-
 rine rejoined, by all that was ever
 dear to us both, let me conjure you
 to desist from your cruel purpose.”

“You plead in vain. I leave you
 to hang with fondness on the smiles
 of my more fortunate rival.”

“This is too much.—Miserable
 wretch that I am, which way shall
 I turn? Every path before me is
 full of guilt. Yet will I be criminal

nal rather than unfaithful and treacherous to the first and dearest partner of my bosom." Scarce had Catharine pronounced these words, when she flung herself into the arms of Mr. Ackland.

Just at this period we heard a confused sound of human voices in the wood. A rustling was perceived, among the boughs and bushes, opposite to the hut, and presently afterwards, to our utter astonishment, Lord Montford, Mr. Mortimer, and a numerous train of followers, who were all armed, rushed forth and surrounded us in an instant.

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

"It is now my turn," cried Lord Montford, "let the accursed villain be secured, for I will have glorious vengeance."

"Hear, first, my vindication, rejoined Mr. Ackland, I plead but for a single moment, and if I do not sufficiently explain my motives for this ———."

"They are perfectly known to me, said Lord Montford, interrupting him. The false and infamous report of your shipwreck,—the account of your decease, at the very time when you lay concealed, for the vilest of purposes,—the repeated visits of that *innocent* and *virtuous* lady to this guilty and damnable

nable spot, have already been but too well explained."

"Sieze the adultrefs," cried Mr. Mortimer, turning to the attendants.

"You will not desert me, said the trembling and affrighted Catharine, grasping the hand of Mr. Ackland, "Suffer me not to be thus cruelly torn from you by these hideous ruffians."

"Sieze the adultrefs," reiterated Mr. Mortimer, in an agony of rage.

"Hold!" cried Mr. Ackland, stepping in front of Catharine, and presenting the pistol, which he had hitherto

hitherto concealed in his pocket,—
 “I swear by all that is sacred, that
 the first who dares to approach
 shall fall a victim to his rashness.”

“Pitiful coward,” cried Lord
 Montford, drawing his sword, and
 making a violent lunge at the
 breast of his opponent. The attack
 was sudden and unexpected, but
 Mr. Ackland, with great agility
 stepped aside, and parried the thrust
 with his pistol, which he immedi-
 ately discharged at his adversary.—
 Lord Montford fell, clapped his
 hand to his left side, and *instantly*
expired.

* * * * *

What

What followed, I was too much terrified to observe, and of course, cannot now relate. All I need add, is, that from this scene, dreadful as it has been, I cannot help predicting the happiest consequences.

LETTER LI.

FROM THE SAME.

WITHOUT doubt, Colonel,
 you expect that I shall
 offer you a handsome excuse for not
 writing before, but I have no time
 to throw away in apologies, for I
 am,

am, this instant, going to attend my lovely friend to the altar.

I need not tell you, that since the death of Lord Montford, Mr. Ackland has undergone a formal trial, and has been honourably acquitted; but you will be surprised to hear, that Mr. Mortimer, the stubborn and inflexible Mr. Mortimer, finding all his family dignities vanished like a summer's cloud, has at length, for a moment, waked from his dream of ambition, and submitted to a reconciliation with the husband of Catharine. As a salvo to his honour, however, he has insisted on a repetition of the marriage ceremony, which is this morning to take place, and which will be made as public as possible, and celebrated with

with all imaginable splendor. All his tenants are invited on the occasion, and every room will "blaze with lights, and bray with minstrels."

And now, Colonel, the happiness of my friend is, at last, complete, the term of your noviciate is therefore expired. But, should you, insolently insist upon the performance of my *promise*, my compliance with your demand, will afford me ample revenge.

FINIS.

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